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FORMER ZANESVILLE POLICE OFFICER PLEADS GUILTY TO DRUG CONSPIRACY AND FIREARMS CRIMES

COLUMBUS – Former Zanesville Police officer Sean Beck, age 29, pleaded guilty in United States District Court here today to one count of conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute more than 500 grams of cocaine and one count of possession of a firearm during a drug crime. Under terms of the plea agreement, Beck faces 20 years imprisonment followed by five years of supervised release.

Gregory G. Lockhart, United States Attorney for the Southern District of Ohio, Keith L. Bennett, Special Agent in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Cincinnati, Muskingum County Sheriff Robert J. Stephenson, and Zanesville Police Chief Eric Lambes announced the plea entered today before United States District Judge Edmund A. Sargus, Jr.

According to a statement of facts filed with the plea agreement, Beck contacted a known Zanesville-area drug dealer in August, 2007 to see if the dealer could arrange for the shipment of a kilogram of cocaine to Zanesville. Beck's plan called for him to use his police authority to seize the drugs by staging a fake raid on the delivery of the cocaine. Beck would then give the drugs to the individual who was to sell the cocaine and split the proceeds with Beck.

The drug dealer took the information to the Muskingum County Sheriff's Office and the FBI, who began investigating Beck. The investigation included arranging a phony delivery of cocaine to a Zanesville cemetery. On September 25, 2007 Beck, Zanesville Police officer Trevor Fusner and auxiliary police officer Chad Mills met at the cemetery to conduct a false police "raid" on the anticipated delivery of the cocaine. Beck wore undercover police clothing, a bullet-proof vest, a "POLICE" t-shirt, and carried his service weapon. At the meeting, the confidential witness told Beck, Mills and Fusner that the deal had fallen through.

FBI agents arrested the three on October 1, 2007. Mills and Fusner have pleaded guilty to conspiracy and are awaiting sentencing. Beck has been in custody since his arrest.

"While the crimes carry a minimum statutory punishment of ten years imprisonment, Officer Beck abused a position of public trust as a law enforcement officer in the commission of the crime," Lockhart said regarding the terms of the plea agreement.

Lockhart commended the cooperative investigation by the Sheriff's Office and FBI agents, as well as Assistant U.S. Attorneys Michael Marous and David DeVillers who are prosecuting the case.

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